



## *News Release*

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### **Governor Granholm Proclaims Oct. 9-15 as “Fire Prevention Week”**

**September 30, 2005** – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm issued a proclamation in honor of Fire Prevention Week from October 9-15 to encourage homeowners to protect themselves and their families by installing and testing smoke alarms and using precautions while burning candles.

“Many people don’t realize that they are at greater danger from fire at home than anywhere else,” said Andy Neumann, State Fire Marshal. “Fortunately, there are many things residents can do make their homes safer. Fire Prevention Week is the time when we reach out to the community one-on-one, teaching people of every age how to prevent fires. This year, we’ll be focusing in particular on candle fires, a serious and growing part of the fire problem.”

Fire Prevention Week has been sponsored nationwide for 83 years by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). This year’s theme is: “Use Candles with Care: When you go out, blow out!” Home candle fires have risen steadily over the last decade.

In 2004 there were 141 reported fire deaths in Michigan. Only 16.3% of the homes where a fire death occurred had smoke alarms present. Four percent of those devices did not work, most often because of missing, dead or disconnected batteries.

“Half of all home fire deaths in Michigan last year resulted in fires reported between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.,” said Neumann. “It is critical to install smoke alarms and test them once a month and replace batteries annually. And if the smoke alarm is more than 10 years old, install a new one. Test your alarm for life.”

In addition to using candles safely, the Michigan Office of the State Fire Marshal is urging residents to install smoke alarms on every level of the home and in every bedroom, test them monthly and change the batteries annually. All smoke alarms should be replaced with a new unit after 10 years.

In addition to maintaining smoke alarms, it is vital that families develop a basic home fire escape plan so they know what to do when a smoke alarm sounds. A fire can spread through a home rapidly. In fact, there may be as little as two minutes to escape safely once the smoke alarm sounds. A downloadable copy of a home fire escape grid is available on the NFPA web site. Every plan should identify two ways out of every room, name an outside meeting place a safe distance from the home where everyone can meet and be practiced through a fire drill twice a year, making the drill as realistic as possible.

More information about candle safety and all forms of fire prevention are available on the NFPA’s official Fire Prevention Week Web site at: [www.firepreventionweek.org](http://www.firepreventionweek.org).

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